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586.1490
8-4529

10 July 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

**SUBJECT: Proposal to Transfer Certain BGN Responsibilities
and Staff Functions to CIA**

1. PROBLEM:

To determine the CIA position on subject proposal of the Department of the Interior.

2. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM:

a. Existing arrangements for preparation of gazetteers of foreign geographic names have been found to be unsatisfactory to the Department of the Interior.

b. The Office of Geography is the staff component of Interior responsible for undertaking foreign name research and maintaining current foreign name files as a major aspect of its staff function to the inter-departmental Board on Geographic Names (BGN). It is mainly supported in this work by CIA funds (Annex A).

c. Interior proposes that CIA assume the responsibilities and staff functions for foreign geographic names and render staff assistance to the Subcommittee on Foreign Names of BGN (Annex B).

d. Under existing legislation (Annexes C and D) the Board, subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, has the duty of formulating principles, policies, and procedures for domestic and foreign names to serve the interests of the Federal Government and the general public, and for deciding the standard names and their orthography for official use. The Secretary has the duty of providing assistance to the Board and promulgating the name decisions of the Board.

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e. Foreign geographic names are promulgated through NIS gazetteers to serve the intelligence requirements of the government and through BGN gazetteers to serve the public interests. The foreign name lists are identical for both gazetteers (Annex E).

3. DISCUSSION:

a. The Department of the Interior considers the research on foreign geographic names and the related name file maintenance and service to be unrelated to its departmental mission and functions. In consequence, it proposes that CIA assume the responsibilities and staff functions for this work since it is mainly supported by CIA funds under the NIS Program. Acceptance of this proposal would involve the administrative transfer to CIA of all or most of the staff of the Office of Geography, Interior; the furnishing of staff support to the BGN Subcommittee on Foreign Names; and the assumption of responsibility for foreign geographic names in the interest of the Federal Government and the general public if the intent of the Act is to be fulfilled.

b. Irrespective of Interior's position, it is difficult to see how CIA could accept as a matter of common concern responsibilities which transcend the intelligence field. It might be argued that the Secretary of the Interior could be prevailed upon to retain his nominal responsibilities under the Act and service through the Board the public requirements and queries on foreign names. Even so, the research staff, presently the Office of Geography, Interior, would have to be called upon to furnish the data to support these requirements. The proposed transfer of these functions to CIA would necessarily involve this Agency in such activities. "The NIS gazetteers serve intelligence requirements only. It has been our position to fulfill this responsibility only to the point where a self-supporting BGN public gazetteer program can eventually take over and service both government and public needs. In the interim, however, it is essential to intelligence needs to have the foreign names capability maintained."

c. This leads to the possibility of some other Government department or agency taking on the foreign names responsibility. Since the Army Map Service (AMS) maintains a foreign names activity approximately as large as that presently conducted in the Office of Geography, Interior,

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and the other Services have only nominal activities in this field, AMS might be considered by some as an appropriate recipient of this responsibility. Where at all possible, AMS follows BGN foreign name policy and is the largest user of foreign names in its production of large-scale maps of foreign areas. Even if assigned foreign names responsibility, the AMS activity in this field would probably continue to be directed primarily toward fulfillment of the Army's operational requirements, with a consequent lack of assurance that CIA's requests for scheduled support to the NIS gazetteer and editing programs would be obtained or that the rest of the U. S. Government or public would be adequately served as required by the Act -- the latter being in the long-range interests of the gazetteer program.

d. The Department of State, however, is in a position to serve directly the public interests; has a primary responsibility in matters relating to foreign areas; and has long maintained an active interest in the formulation of foreign geographic name policy, particularly in relation to sovereignty claims and actions by foreign governments. Not overburdened by its own operational requirements for foreign names, the Department of State would be in a favorable position to provide support to the NIS gazetteer program, the BGN public gazetteer program, and otherwise to serve both Government and public requirements. CIA could continue to furnish funds for the NIS manuscript and editing work as it now does with Interior.

4. CONCLUSIONS:

a. The proposal of the Department of the Interior to transfer to CIA certain responsibilities and staff functions relating to foreign geographic names involves requirements beyond those of the intelligence community.

b. The intelligence requirements for foreign names are presently being fulfilled by the NIS gazetteer program; however, it is the CIA position to rely eventually on the BGN program of public gazetteers as the primary source of foreign geographic names.

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c. For the above reasons, it is considered unwise for this Agency to accept Interior's proposal.


d. Of other government agencies, the Department of State appears to have the most suitable environment for assuming the responsibilities and staff functions relating to foreign geographic names.

e. Foreign name requirements of the intelligence community could adequately be satisfied under that arrangement.

5. **ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

It is recommended that the DCI not accept the proposal of the Department of the Interior, and that another department, most logically the Department of State, be considered in lieu of CIA.


**Assistant Director
Basic Intelligence**


**OTTO E. GUTHE
Assistant Director
Research and Reports**

ANNEXES:

- (A) Statement of BGN support to the NIS Program.
- (B) Tentative letter (ER 5-4143 undated) from Assistant Secretary of the Interior to the Director of Central Intelligence (with enclosures), and subsequent letter dated 29 June 1956.
- (C) Public Law 242 - 80th Congress [Chapter 330 - 1st Session] [S. 1262] Approved 25 July 1947.
- (D) Senate Report No. 205 of the Committee on Public Lands on Geographic Names Standardization.
- (E) Letter from DD/I to Executive Secretary of BGN, dated 16 March 1955.

CONCURRENCES:

[Redacted Signature Box]

DD/I

JUL 17 1956

Date

The propriety of CIA assuming this function is open to serious question. It may well be possible, however, that Department of State properly could assume this function if requested by the Department of Interior.

/s/ JOHN S. WARNER

17 July 1956

Acting General Counsel

Date

Per DDCI:

Concur that it is not for CIA but that it should be done by somebody. Do not believe we should volunteer for State.

DDCI

CPC

19 July '56

Date

Distribution:

Original - Addressee
(retd to DD/I per DDCI)

1- ER

1- DDCI

+ General Counsel

1- DD/I

1- AD/RF

APPROVED:

(DCI has seen - per DDCI)

DCI

Date

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27 April 1956

Board on Geographic Names

The BGN is charged by statute with the standardization of geographic names in the United States and its possessions, and all foreign areas. With the activation of the NIS Program in 1948, there was a need for the development of gazetteers to insure uniformity in geographic names throughout the approximately 85 different sections and related base maps of the NIS for which production responsibility was assigned to more than 40 different components of IAC and non-IAC agencies. Arrangements were made, therefore, to fiscally support the BGN on a continuing basis in the preparation of gazetteers for the NIS Program.

In addition to the production of the gazetteers the BGN also reviews for geographic name consistency all the contributions received from the more than 40 contributors to this program. At the time this gazetteer program was started there were no other gazetteers in existence suitable for NIS purposes, and there is still no other gazetteer program in being that can meet requirements of the NIS Program and the intelligence community as a whole.

Gazetteers have been produced on more than 85 of the 103 land areas of the world. However, because of the urgency of making approved standardized geographic names available to NIS producing offices in the early stages of the NIS Program, most of these gazetteers were produced in preliminary form with the realization that further name research and expansion of these gazetteers would be necessary to fully meet NIS requirements. Revision of these preliminary gazetteers is now underway.

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Specifically, the Office of Geography, Department of the Interior, performs the following services and functions in contributing to the National Intelligence Survey:

- a. Undertakes research and generates standard geographic names for reproduction and distribution by CIA. These gazetteers cover all areas assigned for name standardization research.
- b. Effects name standardization for and editing of base maps used by all contributing agencies in their preparation of NIS Sections and other elements.
- c. Edits all NIS elements produced by the contributing agencies in the course of each fiscal year. This amounts to editing the text and accompanying tables, figures, and maps for accuracy and consistency of geographic name usage of approximately 350 NIS elements.
- d. Performs such other services as the editing of supplementary geographic name lists, the maintenance of a geographic name inquiries service, and the issuance of gazetteer correction lists.



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

My dear Mr. Dulles:

Pursuant to our discussion today the Department of the Interior proposes that the Central Intelligence Agency arrange to prepare gazetteers of foreign geographic names itself rather than continue to transfer funds to the Office of Geography of this Department for this work. Further, the Central Intelligence Agency would assume the very limited responsibility of furnishing staff assistance to the foreign subcommittee of the Board on Geographic Names.

Existing arrangements for preparation of gazetteers of foreign names have been found to be unsatisfactory to the Department. The preparation of these gazetteers is unrelated to Interior's natural resources program. This has made it impossible to obtain appropriations, not only for this work but also for domestic geographic names work in which we do have a deep interest. It has also created problems of internal organization and supervision, since the group engaged in this foreign work cannot logically be fitted into our Departmental structure.

Present arrangements with respect to the Interdepartmental Board on Geographic Names would remain unchanged. The Board has been found to be a useful device in carrying out the geographic names standardization program. We propose that as of the beginning of fiscal year 1957 the Central Intelligence Agency begin to do its own foreign gazetteer work and like work for its client agencies in the Department of Defense.

The Central Intelligence Agency would appoint an executive director, who would be responsible for directing its foreign gazetteer work and in addition he would provide the Board with whatever staff assistance its Subcommittee on Foreign Names needs in connection with foreign names decisions. Likewise, the Department of the Interior would appoint an executive director for domestic names standardization work who would be an official of our Geological Survey and who would provide the Board's Subcommittee on Domestic

Names with whatever staff assistance that Subcommittee needs. He also would provide the very limited facilities needed for the Board as a whole as distinguished from its subcommittee.

Under existing legislation (61 Stat. 456) the Board, subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, has the duty of formulating principles, policies and procedures to be followed for domestic and foreign names, and for deciding the standard names and their orthography for official use. The Secretary has the duty of providing assistance to the Board and promulgating the name decisions of the Board.

As to the promulgation of Board decisions there is little reason why the Secretary of the Interior should retain such a responsibility with respect to foreign names. The same applies to approving principles, policies and procedures formulated by the Board with respect to foreign geographic names. This Department does not have any special interest with this aspect of geographic name work. Accordingly, it is suggested that the Central Intelligence Agency arrange to produce whatever gazetteers of foreign names that it and its clients need, and that it render staff assistance to the Board's Subcommittee on Foreign Names.

If you agree with the foregoing proposal, effect can be given to such agreement by your signing and returning this letter to me. It is understood, of course, that certain administrative arrangements would have to be made, particularly with respect to personnel to be transferred to your Agency from the Office of Geography. Administrative Assistant Secretary Beasley, of the Department would cooperate with members of your staff on completing these arrangements.

Sincerely yours,

Assistant Secretary of the Interior

I concur:

Director, Central Intelligence Agency

Hon. Allen W. Dulles
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington 25, D. C.

Enclosures

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Existing Situation Regarding Foreign Name Work of Office of Geography

- Legislation: 61 Stat. 456 (1947) established Board on Geographic Names and directed the Secretary conjointly with the Board, to work for uniformity in geographic nomenclature and orthography.
- The Board: Representatives of the following Departments: State, Air Force, Navy, Army, Post Office, Agriculture, Commerce, and Interior also, Central Intelligence Agency, Library of Congress, and Government Printing Office.
- Functions:
- (a) The Board. Subject to the approval of the Secretary, the Board on Geographic Names shall formulate principles policy and procedures to be followed for domestic and foreign names and their orthography for official use.
 - (b) The Secretary. He shall provide for such researches and staff as the Board needs to perform its functions; keep necessary records, provide physical facilities for the Board; he shall promulgate the name decisions of the Board.
- Funds:
- (a) For domestic name work. None since fiscal year 1951. (See Table A)
 - (b) For foreign name work. (See Table B.)
- Staff: Approximately 80 persons, virtually all of whom are engaged in preparing gazetteers of foreign geographic names for the CIA and its client agencies.
- Activities:
- (a) Domestic name work. Decisions on comparatively few disputed name cases. No appropriation. Inability to obtain any appropriations for Office of Geography negates provisions of the law directing standardization of domestic names. Domestic map making agencies conduct geographic name function themselves as an incident to map making, submitting only names known to be in dispute for adjudication. New quadrangle maps are published each year containing thousands of names without benefit of consideration by the Board on Geographic Names or of the Office.

(b) Foreign Name Work. Consists largely of compiling gazetteers (lists of names in alphabetic order with longitude and latitude) for whole countries, rendered into the Roman alphabet, published in book form. Disputes as to proper names are rare. Gazetteers are used for preparing foreign maps by CIA and its client agencies. Thousands of geographic names appear in a single gazetteer.

Line of
Demarcation

There is a very sharp line between domestic and foreign names. The Board is organized as follows:

Executive Subcommittee
Domestic Subcommittee
Foreign Subcommittee

Operating procedures are wholly different. Library and file facilities are separated. Source of funds are separate. The entire staff of approximately 80 persons are engaged primarily in foreign name work.

OFFICE OF THE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON



June 29, 1956

My dear Mr. Dulles:

Upon my return to the office yesterday I reflected upon our interesting conversation with reference to a proper home for the Division of Geography. I can well understand your problem of finding appropriate space and facilities for the Division, and in that connection I have discussed with my associates here the possibility of assisting you by permitting the Division to stay in the building here until you can make the necessary arrangements in your own buildings.

I am pleased to report that we will be glad to have the Division of Geography remain here for a reasonable period while you solve this problem.

Sincerely yours,

Felix E. Wormser

Felix E. Wormser
Assistant Secretary

Honorable Allen W. Dulles
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington 25, D. C.

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(Pub. Law 242)

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of meeting and staff assistance to the Board. The staff shall be responsible to the Secretary, who shall prescribe its relations to the Board and the committees of the Board. The Secretary may establish from time to time, upon recommendation of the Board, advisory committees of United States citizens who are recognized experts in their respective fields to assist in the solution of special problems arising under this Act.

SEC. 5. For the guidance of the Federal Government, the Secretary shall promulgate in the name of the Board, from time to time and in such form as will carry out the purposes of this Act, decisions with respect to geographic names and principles of geographic nomenclature and orthography. The Secretary shall also furnish such additional information with respect to geographic names as will assist in carrying out the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 6. With respect to geographic names the pertinent decisions and principles issued by the Secretary shall be standard for all material published by the Federal Government. The United States Board on Geographical Names in the Department of the Interior created by Executive order, is hereby abolished, and the duties of said Board are transferred to the Board herein created, and all departments, bureaus, and agencies of the Federal Government shall refer all geographic names and problems to the said Board for the purpose of eliminating duplication of work, personnel, and authority.

SEC. 7. Nothing in this Act shall be construed as applying to the naming of the offices or establishments of any Federal agency.

SEC. 8. There are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

Approved July 28, 1947.

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Department of the Interior,
Washington, May 23, 1947.

Hon. Hugh Butler,
Chairman, Public Lands Committee, United States Senate.

My Dear Senator Butler: Reference is made to your request for a report on S. 1262, a bill to provide a central authority for standardizing geographic names for the purpose of eliminating duplication in standardizing such names among the Federal Departments, and for other purposes. I strongly recommend that S. 1262 be enacted.

The bill would authorize:

1. Performance of functions necessary for the national security and defense, and for orderly and efficient conduct of Government business;
2. Centralization of authority and operations;
3. Elimination of duplication of personnel and expense;
4. Continuation of services that have been rendered for more than 50 years.

The bill is identical with H. R. 1555 as amended and reported out by unanimous favorable vote by the House Public Lands Committee. The bill before amendment had been given unanimous approval by the Advisory Committee of the present Board on Geographical Names and by all the Federal agencies represented on the committee. It is believed that the amendments, incorporated in S. 1262, will be acceptable to all concerned.

More than half a century ago, in 1890, the original United States Board on Geographic Names was created by Executive order of President Benjamin Harrison, to give official authority to a spontaneously organized interdepartmental committee, with the object of bringing about "uniform usage in regard to geographic nomenclature and orthography. * * * throughout the executive departments of the Government" and deciding "all unsettled questions concerning geographic names which arise in the departments." It had become apparent at that early date that confusion arising from incorrect or contradictory names for places and natural features was costly to the Government and to the country at large, and that a central authority was required to decide upon names and their forms which would be official for the use of the Government. Different names or spellings for the same places were being used on maps issued by different agencies, or in publications of a single agency, and in some instances even on the same page of a publication. In other cases where the name was not in doubt its application varied greatly. One agency, for instance, might apply a name to the whole course of a river, while an-

other agency applied that name only to a branch of the same river. In such cases references to the feature by name were ambiguous and would require a clarification which only an impartial central agency would be able to provide from data in its possession or secured for the purpose. Persons and business firms in communities where the post office name or railway station name or both are not the same as the community name have experienced annoying and expensive difficulties and delays in the delivery of mail and freight.

Two Executive orders of President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906 enlarged the duties of the Board, changed its name to United States Geographic Board and granted it additional advisory powers with respect to map preparation. These latter powers were subsequently transferred by Executive order of President Woodrow Wilson in 1919, to the Board of Surveys and Maps. In 1934 President Franklin D. Roosevelt by Executive order abolished the United States Geographic Board and transferred its powers, duties, records, and personnel to the Department of the Interior. The Secretary of the Interior established a Division of Geographic Names and an Advisory Committee on Geographic Names and provided by departmental order in 1935 that these two units, together, should constitute the United States Board on Geographical Names. In 1944 the Secretary of the Interior provided by departmental order that the United States Board on Geographical Names should be composed of a Division of Geography and an advisory committee, and clarified the duties and relations of these two units.

Until 1920 all expenses of the Board under the requirements of the Executive orders had been met by the represented bureaus. This unbusiness like financing imposed real handicaps upon the work. The first specific appropriation for the Board was made for 1920 for the publishing of decisions. Beginning with 1927 the appropriation also covered salaries and other expenses. Appropriations then were made continuously to the United States Geographic Board until the transfer of its functions to the Department of the Interior. Thereafter funds for the performance of these functions were provided in the annual appropriations for the Department of the Interior through 1947, with the exception of 1 year in which the work was financed entirely from War Department appropriations. In 1943 the Corps of Engineers of the War Department offered to provide through transfer the funds necessary to reorganize and staff the agency immediately on the expanded scale requisite to meet military and naval needs. This was done, and other transfers have since been made to meet like needs.

In recent years the desirability of obtaining permanent legislative authorization for the geographic-names work has been suggested by the Appropriations Committees of both Houses. The uncertainty as to the legal authorization for the work is also illustrated by the action taken on the appropriation items. For 1946 a request was made for an appropri-

tion for the Division of Geography to enable it to render aid to civilian agencies requiring information and decisions on disputed names, the War Department having indicated its willingness to continue to finance the heavy program required directly by war activities. In its report the House Appropriations Committee stated that it was "impressed with the importance of the work and the efficiency with which it is being performed," but took the position that the War Department should continue to provide the funds until after the cessation of hostilities. The Senate restored the item, and the conference committee agreed on a small appropriation for the maintenance of basic records and files and for work on problems of agencies other than the War and Navy Departments. When the 1947 appropriation request was submitted the House Appropriations Committee granted a very modest sum for like purposes but this item was made the subject of a point of order on the floor of the House and stricken from the bill on the ground that the activity was not authorized by substantive legislation. The Senate again restored the item, and the amount originally granted was agreed to in the conference committee, resulting in an appropriation that can be considered only as a token that the functions are essential in peacetime as well as in wartime.

The enactment of S. 1262 would provide the requisite statutory basis for the continuance of a program which the Congress has considered worthy of support for more than 25 years, and would eliminate the possibility of a point of order being made and sustained against a future appropriation item for this activity. How much or how little might be made available for the geographic-names work in any given year would be determined annually by the Congress, in accordance with its judgment as to the current needs for such work and over-all budgetary resources. The functions provided for are essentially the same as those now being discharged. Its provisions would codify, in statutory form, the duties which the Division of Geography, as the designated agent of the Secretary of the Interior, and the Advisory Committee have been performing. Section 2 of the bill establishes a Board on Geographic Names to replace the present Advisory Committee with increased duties and powers. The membership of this Board would consist of representatives of certain Federal agencies named or designated in the bill together with such representatives from other Federal agencies as the Secretary, upon the advice of the Board, from time to time determined to be desirable.

Enactment of this legislation would not invalidate decisions, directions, and policies now in effect, since these would be affirmed under the new authority. It should also be pointed out that there are circumstances under which the use of the standard geographical names determined under existing procedures, as confirmed by the bill, would be inappropriate, such as in certain historical materials, documents requiring use of official titles of countries instead of the names by which they are ordinarily designated, or facsimile reproductions of non-Government material. It may also be impracticable under some conditions for materials printed in the

field by the armed forces in wartime, to employ only standard names. The provisions of the proposed legislation are sufficiently flexible to permit such exceptions to be determined administratively rather than being permanently fixed by statute.

Because of the urgency of your request it has not been possible to clear this report through the Bureau of the Budget. Therefore, no commitment can be made concerning the relationship of the foregoing views to the program of the President.

Sincerely yours,

OSCAR L. CHAPMAN,
Under Secretary of the Interior.

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TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE
		27 July 1956
TO: Mr. Warner, O/GC		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
325	EAST	
REMARKS:		
<p>The attached is returned with many thanks.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>[Signature]</i></p>		
FROM: H. Gates Lloyd, ADD/S		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	EXTENSION
121	East	

FORM NO. 241
1 FEB 55

REPLACES FORM 36-8
WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

TRANSMITTAL SLIP		
11 July 1956 (Date)		
TO: General Counsel		
BUILDING	ROOM NO.	
East	221	
REMARKS:		
<p style="text-align: right;"><i>[Signature]</i></p>		
FROM: AD/BI		
BUILDING	ROOM NO.	EXTENSION
HLH	126	